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This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 001467

SIPDIS

FBI FOR SIOC AND ITOS/TGU
STATE FOR S/CT, INR/IAA, NEA, AND CA
STATE FOR INR/TIPOFF
STATE FOR DA/IP/WHA AND DS/ICI/ITA
STATE FOR WHA/PPC AND WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2029
TAGS: PTER, ASEC, KVPR, PINR, KJUS, KCRM, PGOV, CVIS, HO
SUBJECT: HONDURAN SECURITY MINISTER ALLEGES SENIOR AL-QAIDA
OPERATIVE VISTED HONDURAS

REF: A. PANAMA 1372

B. PANAMA 1515
C. TEGUCIGALPA 1046
D. 06/09/04 RSO TEGUCIGALPA-PANAMA LEGATT-DS/IP/WHA
EMAIL

Classified By: Political Counselor Francisco Palmieri;
reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (S) Summary: On June 29, Honduran Minister of Public Security (MOPS) Oscar Alvarez told the Honduran press senior Saudi Al-Qaida operative, Adnan Gulshair El-Shukrijumah, had been spotted in Honduras but has since left the country. MOPS Alvarez alleged that El-Shukrijumah was seen in an internet cafe before heading to Panama. These reports are uncorroborated and premature, although Post believes there may exist a possibility that El-Shukrijumah recently visited Honduras. In conjunction with Honduran authorities, RSO has been tracking the internet cafe lead and a separate possible sighting, in an effort to confirm El-Shukrijumah had, in fact, been to Honduras. However, MOPS Alvarez's public comments, partly based on a Panamanian newspaper report he had recently read, will complicate this effort. End Summary

2. (S) On June 29, Honduran Minister of Public Security

(MOPS) Oscar Alvarez told the Honduran press that senior Saudi Al-Qaida operative, Adnan Gulshair El-Shukrijumah had been spotted in Honduras but has since left the country. MOPS Alvarez alleged that El-Shukrijumah was cited in an internet cafe before heading to Panama, where he allegedly might be working on a plan to attack the Canal. Prior to these allegations, El-Shukrijumah's presence in Panama had been highly suspected (ref A and B).

3. (S) RSO has been tracking two separate possible sightings (ref D) of El-Shukrijumah in Honduras. The first report concerned two American TDYers who had a possible sighting of El-Shukrijumah on June 2, 2004. The reported sighting occurred at approximately 12:15 pm when both TDY personnel were eating lunch at a Subway sandwich shop located a few blocks from the Embassy. While eating, they noticed two men enter the shop. Both men appeared to be of Arab extraction. The men had entered together and appeared to be friends. According to the TDY personnel, while standing in the sandwich line both men noticed the American sitting in the nearby booth eating. At this point, both subjects started whispering amongst themselves and looking at the Americans. The older subject seemed very nervous and impatient. The TDY personnel noted that both subjects were carrying laptop bags strapped over their shoulders. The older subject's bag had a Microsoft emblem, plus he was wearing a fanny pack in front. (Note: These TDY personnel were both technicians who work with computers and other related equipment. End Note.)

4. (S) The TDY personnel stated that neither subject appeared to be fluent in Spanish when ordering their food, appearing to struggle a little with the language. As the Americans were leaving the sandwich shop, they noticed the older subject was paying for his food with a grayish silver-colored visa card and also appeared to have some form of Honduran ID in his other hand. The TDYers came back to the Embassy and reported to their supervisor that they had seen two Arab males acting strangely in the Subway sandwich shop. At the time they reported this contact, neither was aware of the look-out for El-Shukrijumah. The two then reported to the RSO after they saw the photo of El-Shukrijumah in the local paper. They both believed that the younger subject had a strong resemblance to El-Shukrijumah.

5. (S) The second incident allegedly occurred at an unidentified internet cafe in Tegucigalpa soon after the FBI poster identifying El-Shukrijumah as a wanted terrorist suspect was released. This is the report that MOPS Alvarez shared with the Honduras press. While it should not be dismissed out of hand due to the nature of the incident, RSO has not/not been able to confirm or corroborate any of the details of this alleged incident. RSO notes, however, that the physical description of the internet cafe sighting of the two suspects resembles the description of the individuals seen at the Subway shop by the American TDYers

6. (S) Comment: MOPS Alvarez's remarks regarding El-Shukrijumah's presence in Honduras are premature and

unsubstantiated. He acknowledged later that his comments that El-Shukrijumah was en route to Panama and might be planning to attack the Canal, were based on a newspaper article he read last weekend while visiting Panama. While it is possible El-Shukrijumah visited Honduras recently, Post can not/not confirm this. RSO is continuing to investigate and Post will report via septel any further confirmed evidence of El-Shukrijumah's alleged presence. MOPS Alvarez's public comments, however, were unconstructive and could possibly hamper this effort. End Comment.

Palmer

=====CABLE ENDS=====